Beta MediaWiki
Application Administrator Guide
Center for New Media and Citizen Engagement (CNMCE)

October 8, 2010
Version 2.0

Table of Contents

WHAT IS MEDIAWIKI? 1

General Overview 1
Features 1

URLS, THEMES/TEMPLATES, MODIFICATIONS (MODS), AND UPGRADES CAUTION 1

GETTING STARTED 2

Organization 2
Namespaces 2
Main Page and Log in 3
Main Page 4

PREFERENCES 5

User Profile 5

LEFT SIDEBAR 6

SEARCH 6

Special:Allpages 7

CREATE NEW PAGE 7

EDIT/DISCUSS PAGES 9

Preview 9
Formatting 10
Categories 10
Uploads 11
Embed or Link a File 12

CREATE AN ACCOUNT 13

My Page 13

TRACKING AND ADMINISTRATION 14

User Contributions 14
Block 14
Logs 15
User Rights 15
Recent Changes 16
Watchlist 16
Page Deletion 17
Page Protection 17
Statistics 18

MY DASHBOARD 19

APPENDIX A: USEFUL LINKS 20

APPENDIX B: WIKIPEDIA FORMATTING CHEATSHEET 21

APPENDIX C: SPECIAL PAGES 22

APPENDIX D: USER GROUP RIGHTS 23

What is MediaWiki?

General Overview

MediaWiki is a free server program that allows users to actively participate in building the content of a website. The powerful, scalable software is feature-rich, allowing the easy creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages. MediaWiki is often used to create collaborative websites, to power community websites, for personal note taking, in agency intranets, and in knowledge management systems. Its best-known implementation is the collaborative encyclopedia, *Wikipedia*.

Most wikis serve a specific purpose, and off-topic material can be easily removed by the user community. Open-purpose wikis accept a variety of content without rigid rules as to how the content should be organized and they are rarely used in situations that require restricted access.

Features

Some of the many features include:

- **Section editing** capability**,** for editing individual sections of an article (if separated by headlines) instead of loading the entire article.
- An **Edit toolbar** for quick, one-click text format command insertion.
- **Upload control** for both images and sound. Image galleries and thumbnails can be generated with relative ease.
- **Auto-number headings** in an article (optional).
- A subhead-based **table of contents** capability for long articles (optional).
- **Mathematical formula** support using LaTeX syntax.
- **Watchlist.** Every page has a “Watch” link. Use **Special:Watchlist** to track changes in articles of interest; watched articles are also bolded in the **Recent changes** list .
- **User contributions** (in the sidebar of each user page) lists all articles the user has worked on.
- **Talk pages**. Each user and every article has an associated page where messages can be left and dialogues can occur. These are separate namespaces called "**Talk:"**.(See *Namespaces*, page 2.)
- The ability to set **different rights** for anonymous users, signed-in users, sysops, bureaucrats, administrators, and developers.
- **Random article** display function.

Thorough reference manuals for administrators and users are easily accessed through a link on the **Main Page** in the tool that takes you to http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Help:Contents. This document is focused on building familiarity with the site’s structure and options.

> ***TIP:*** *Because this document is designed as a quick guide, some specific Administrative functions and settings may not be addressed. Please contact the GSA – Citizen Engagement Platform (CEP) Team with any questions.*

MediaWiki provides extremely configurable features for System Administrators that allow control of users, rights, articles, the edit page, namespaces, file uploads, the search engine, and more. For the purposes of this user guide a few of the most commonly used features will be addressed.

URLs, Themes/Templates, Modifications (MODs), and Upgrades Caution

Certain features of your APPS NOW provisioned MediaWiki are either pre-set or require that modifications be made by the GSA CNMCE Technical Team. Therefore:

- Your URL will look like this: http://wiki.citizen.apps.gov/yourmediawikiname/
  At this time, the URL is fixed once the product is provisioned. Future releases may offer more flexibility with Vanity URLs.
  TIP: *Please suggest new, interesting MODs at our Release Blog*
- You may not install MediaWiki upgrades. This must be done at the host level.
- If you have a technical or functional question regarding the MediaWiki product or have a suggestion to make, use our Online Help Forum.
  TIP: *Submit your question at MediaWiki Help.*

Getting Started

Organization

There are three major organizational elements in a MediaWiki installation.

- **Namespaces**, which are major wiki subdivisions that contain pages;
- **Pages**, which have titles and contain the content; and
- **Categories**, which are lists of pages that have something in common.

Namespaces

The standard installation has sixteen namespaces which can contain user-generated content. The standard namespaces are organized in pairs, with each pair containing a "subject namespace" and a "talk namespace". Pages in the subject namespace are frequently articles protected from editing, while pages in the discussion namespace can be edited or added to by any confirmed registered user.

All namespaces except *Main* can be identified by the page name prefix, i.e., *User:*, *Help:*, etc. The *Main* namespace does not have a prefix.

> ***TIP:*** *Pages can be moved between namespaces simply by changing the prefix part of their title.*

The eight major namespaces, each with an associated talk namespace, are:

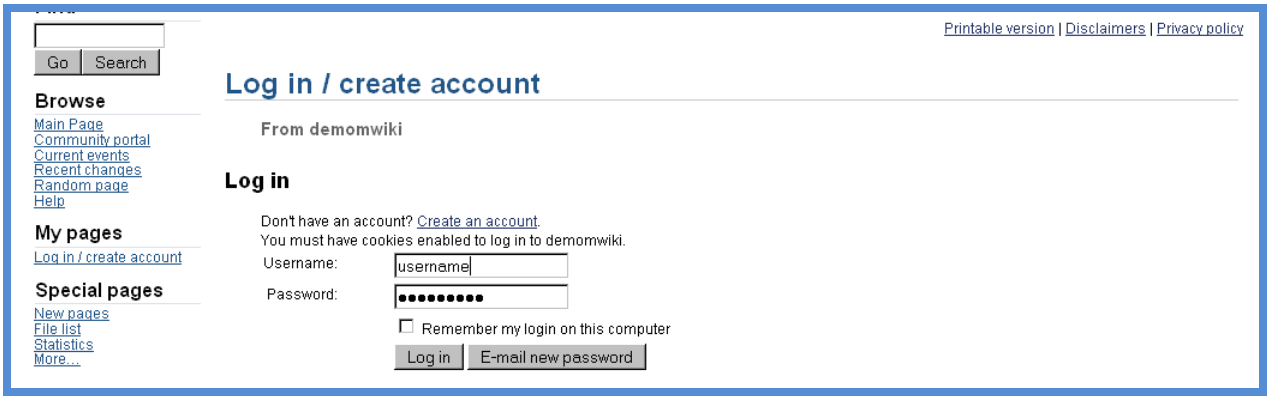
- **Main:** This namespace typically contains the bulk of the content pages in a wiki.
- **User:** Each registered user has a corresponding page in the *User:* namespace, which is linked to and from edit histories, watchlists, recent changes, etc. Users can record information about themselves or use the page to test and draft new content.
- **(Your Wiki Name):** This is a content namespace that is normally used for topics related to the operation and development of the wiki.
- **File:** The *File:* namespace is used to store metadata for images, videos, sound files and other media. Each media file has a corresponding page in the File namespace.
- **MediaWiki:** The *MediaWiki:* namespace is used to hold system messages and other important content. The entire namespace is fully protected and can only be edited by administrators.
- **Template:** The *Template:* namespace is designed to hold blocks of text or wikicode that are intended to be used in other pages.
- **Help:** The *Help:* namespace is usually used to hold help files, instructions and 'how-to' guides.
- **Category:** The *Category:* namespace contains dynamic lists of other pages, usually related to each other in some way. You can insert commands at the bottom of a page that will automatically include it in one or more category lists.

> ***TIP:*** *Pages in the Main namespace cannot have names that start with any of the existing namespace prefixes.*

Namespaces, among other things, allow a separation of content from policy and discussion. They encourage separation of the pages of a wiki into a core set intended for public viewing and private information intended for the editing community.

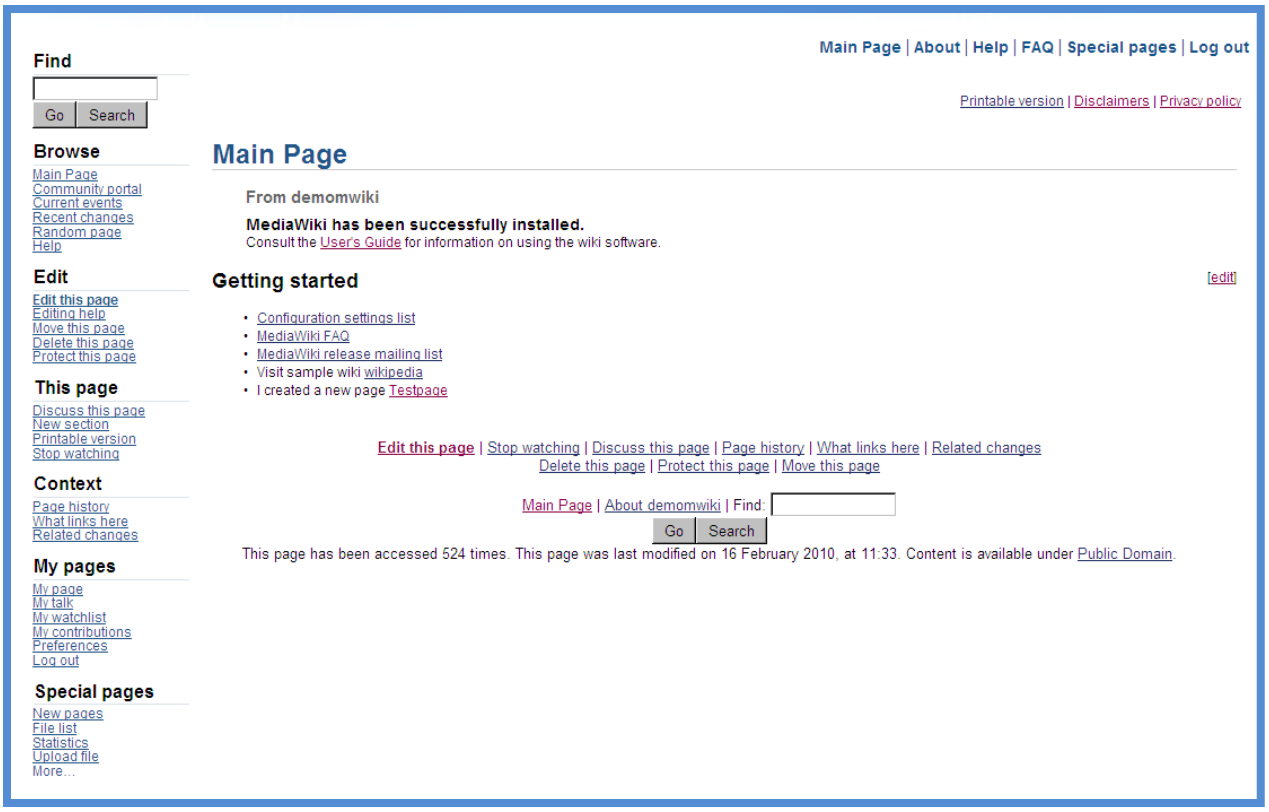
Main Page and Log in

The basic **Main Page** appears when the site first comes up. The “Contents” lists options in an editable project management template that can be viewed by scrolling. Clicking “edit” at the right of any entry will allow you to modify it to suit your needs. Other editable templates will be added in future releases.



Access the Log in screen by clicking one of the two **Log in** links (upper right or lower left). Logging in with your CEP-provided username and password will automatically assign administrative privileges, and you will see the administrator’s **Main Page**.

TIP: *To reset your password go to* ***Special Pages*** *(link at the top right of the Main page), then click* ***Change password*** *under* ***Users and rights****. You cannot change your username.*



Main Page

In a new MediaWiki installation, the center of the main page offers links to various information pages on the *MediaWiki.org* website, and a link (**User's Guide**) to a technical manual at *meta.wikimedia.org*. As your site adds content, you can configure this page any way you like.

> ***NOTE:*** *MediaWiki is installed with the embedded* ***Help*** *pages empty. The administrator must create content for them, or copy and insert any desired information from the MediaWiki Manual. (see Appendix A: Useful Links, page 20).*

The page also has links in several places that will instantly take you to any page in the wiki.

- **Left Sidebar:** Contains the main navigation tools, some of which are duplicated in the other menus. The navigation options will change somewhat depending on the page that is being viewed.
- **Upper Right Navigation Menu:** Links to various site-specific pages, and a **Special pages** link that opens a screen with links to view all the pages in the site.

  > ***TIP: Special pages*** *links to the same page as* ***More*** *at the bottom of the left sidebar.*

- **Bottom Center Toolbox:** A menu of tasks that will change as you browse the wiki, displaying links appropriate to the page you are viewing. On an article page, for example, the Toolbox can display a printable version of the article. When a user page is displayed, the Toolbox will contain a link for emailing that user.
- **Search Box:** The **Search** button operates like a regular search engine, producing a list of articles that match your keywords. The **Go** button jumps directly to a relevant article.

  > ***TIP:*** *If* ***Search*** *can't find an article associated with the keyword, you are offered the opportunity to create one. This is also the starting point for adding a new page. (See Create New Page, page 7.)*

MediaWiki is designed to be a relatively open collaborative tool. Normally, by default, email-confirmed registered users can edit, add content, create pages, and perform many administrative functions. Anonymous and unconfirmed registered users are usually limited to read-only access, and see a more limited set of menu options.

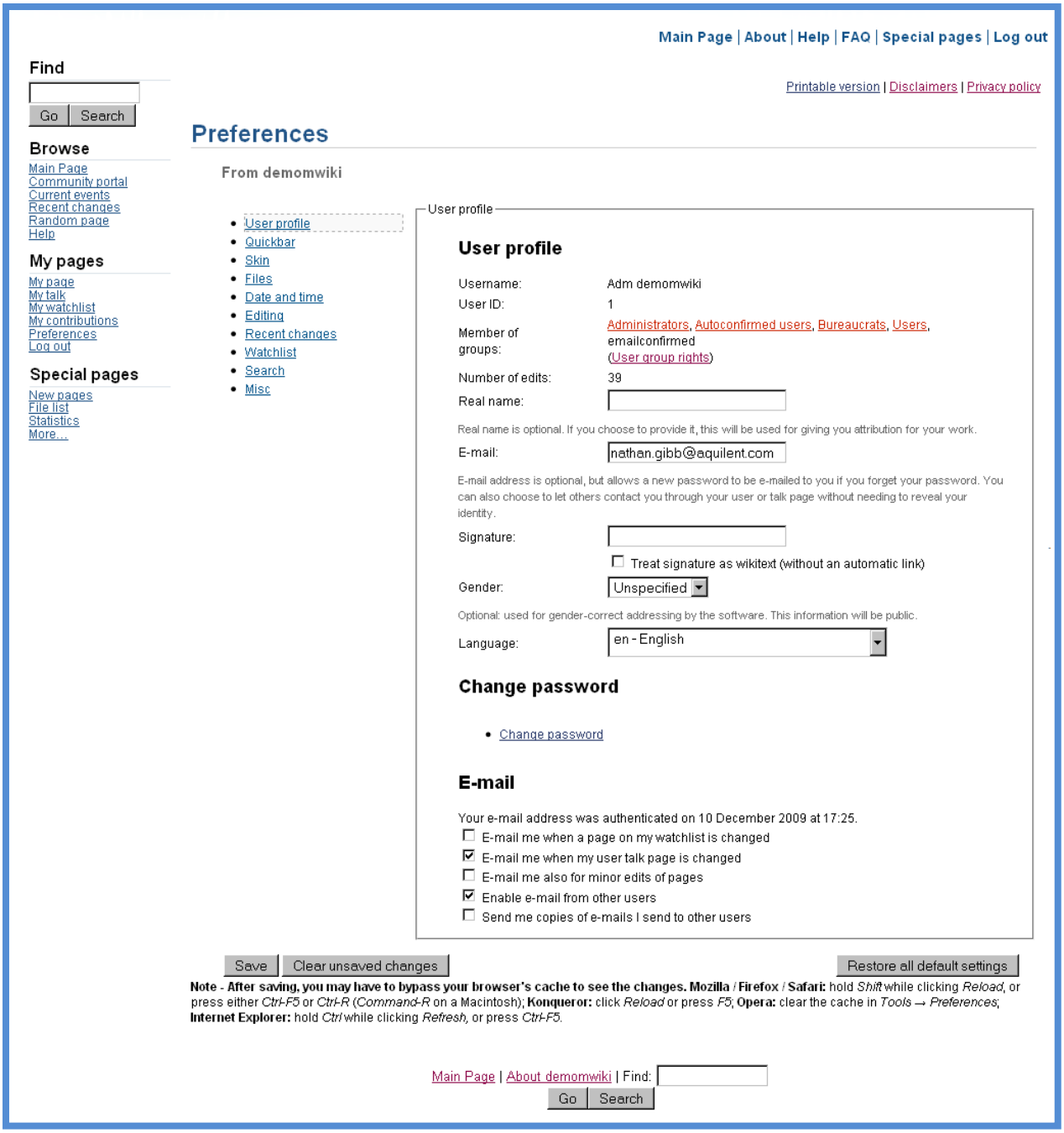
After the initial login (or after creating an account) it is recommended that you first set preferences.

Preferences

User Profile

When you click any **Preferences** link the **User Profile** page appears first. Here you can enter your basic user information, add an email address, choose a signature to be used on contributions, change your password, and select email options. There are also links to nine other pages that contain various appearance and functionality preference settings, including one that allows you to preset the namespaces that will be automatically searched by the Search function.

*TIP: When making changes to any page, whether entering information, editing an article or writing in a discussion window, be sure to hit the **Save** button at the bottom or the changes will be lost.*



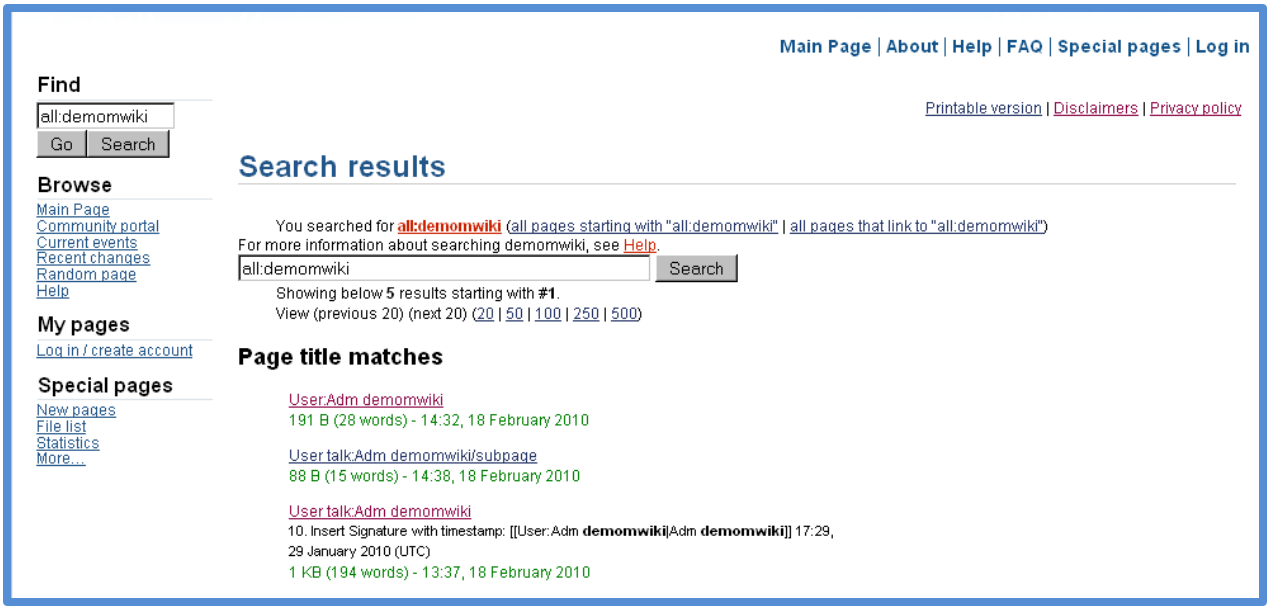
Left Sidebar

The Left Sidebar on the Main Page contains all the links necessary to perform the basic MediaWiki functions, which include:

- Searching the site;
- Creating new pages;
- Editing and discussing pages;
- Uploading files; and
- Accessing a wide range of data about the site.

*TIP: Under **Quickbar** in the Preferences menu, you can change the location of the sidebar.This is not recommended.*

This guide will cover some of the major functional areas.



Search

The quickest way to find information in MediaWiki is to look it up directly. At the top of the left menu there is a **find** box with buttons under it labeled **Go** and **Search**.

With a keyword entered in the searchbox:

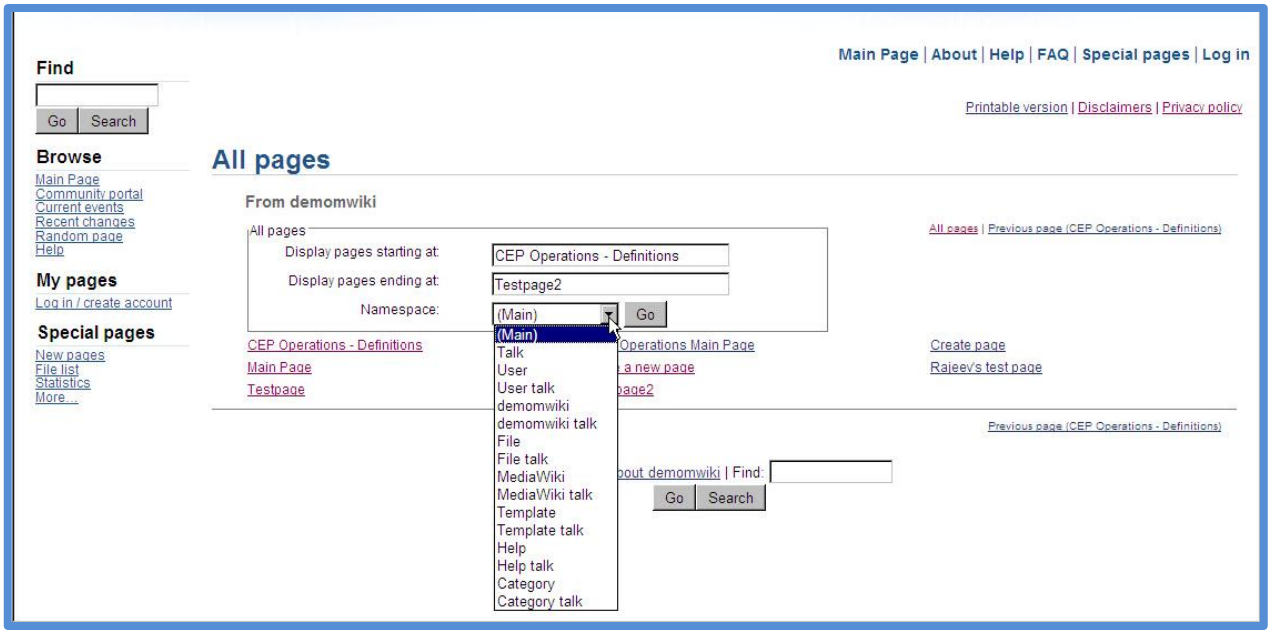
- **Go** - (or *Enter* on keyboard) will take you automatically to an article, if it exists.
- **Search** - will search the text of all pages in the main namespace. (Typing *All:* in front of your search term will broaden the scope to other namespaces.)

Searches are not case-sensitive, and even if you enter a phrase the function will search for instances of each word individually.

*TIP: By default, only the main namespace will be searched. Logged-in users can specify the namespaces to be searched automatically by selecting and deselecting boxes in the **Search** section of user preferences.*

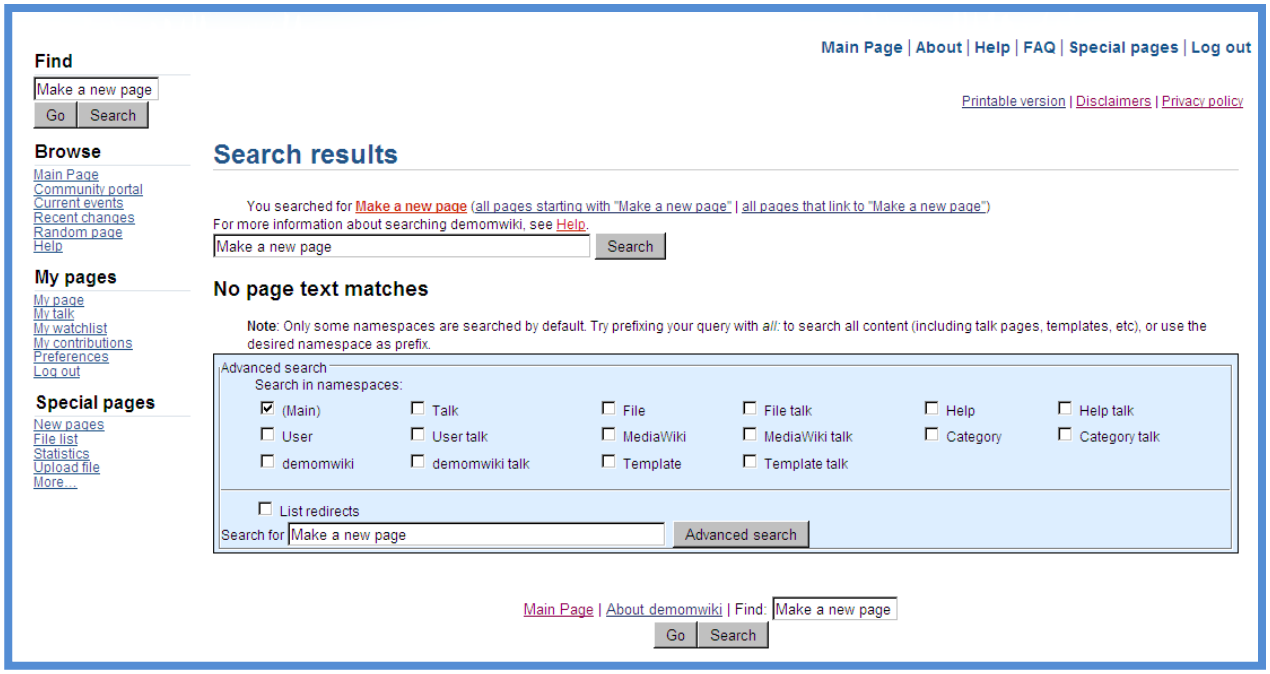
If the page you were looking for does not exist, you will be presented with a list of articles with text that matches your search criteria (or a message that no matches were found), and you will be given the opportunity to create a new page (see *Create New Page* , page 7).

*TIP: If you click the **Search** button without entering anything in the box, you will be taken to **Special:Search** which offers advanced searching options (also available from any search results list).*



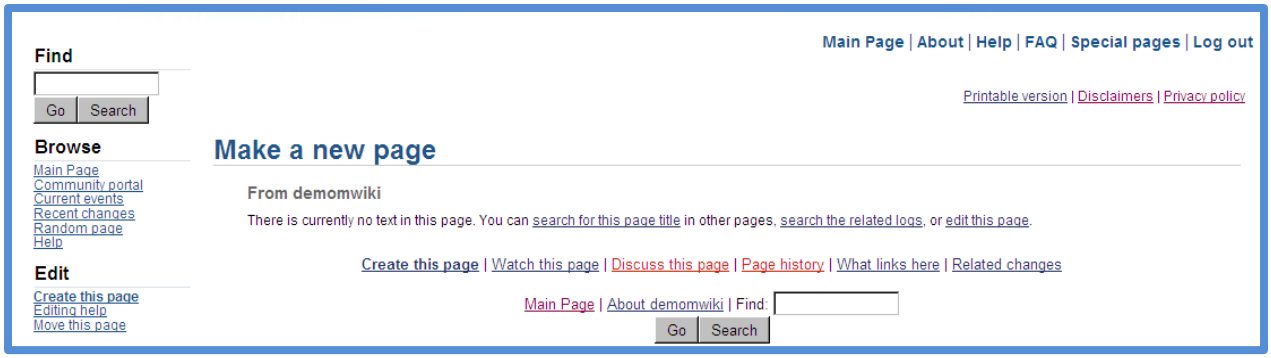
Special:Allpages

MediaWiki does not offer a way to generate a list of all pages on the entire site, but if you type *Special:Allpages* in the **Find** box and click **Go**, you can then select a namespace from the drop-down menu and see all pages resident in that space.



Create New Page

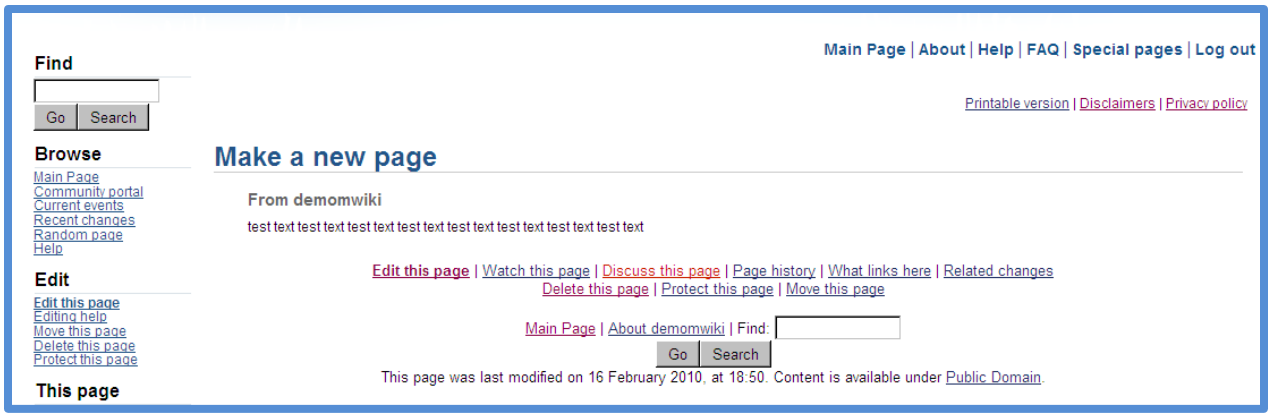
To create a new page, enter a name or topic into the **Find** box at the upper left and click **Search.** If the page does not already exist, you will see the screen above. The non-existent page name will be highlighted in red. Clicking the name generates a screen where you can create the new page.



This screen presents a message saying , "There is currently no text in this page." Clicking **Create this page** opens an edit window with the new page title.

> ***TIP:*** *A page is not technically created, even though there is a searchable title, until text has been entered and the page has been saved. You can then even re-edit the page and delete all the text and the page will still exist.*

After text has been entered (see *Edit/Discuss Pages*, page 9 and *Formatting*, page 10), click **Save page** at the bottom of the screen and the new page will be visible (see below).



Edit/Discuss Pages

Clicking on **Edit this page** (if the page is not protected, see *Page Protection*, page 17) or **Discuss this page** opens an edit window where text can be entered and formatted (see *Formatting*, page 10), image or media files can be embedded or linked (see *Uploads*, page 11), or various commands can be inserted.

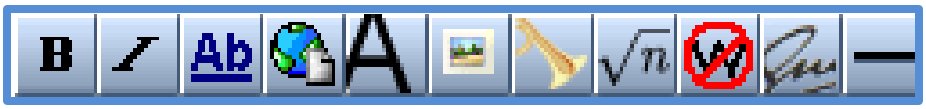
Preview

As you enter and format text you can see what the final result will look like by clicking **Show preview** at the bottom of the page. A preview window will appear above the edit box (see below).

After finishing your edit or discussion comment, be sure to click **Save** or all changes will be lost.

Formatting

Text formatting is done in a language called wiki markup, and involves inserting specialized codes in the edit window that will produce a particular look on the viewed page.

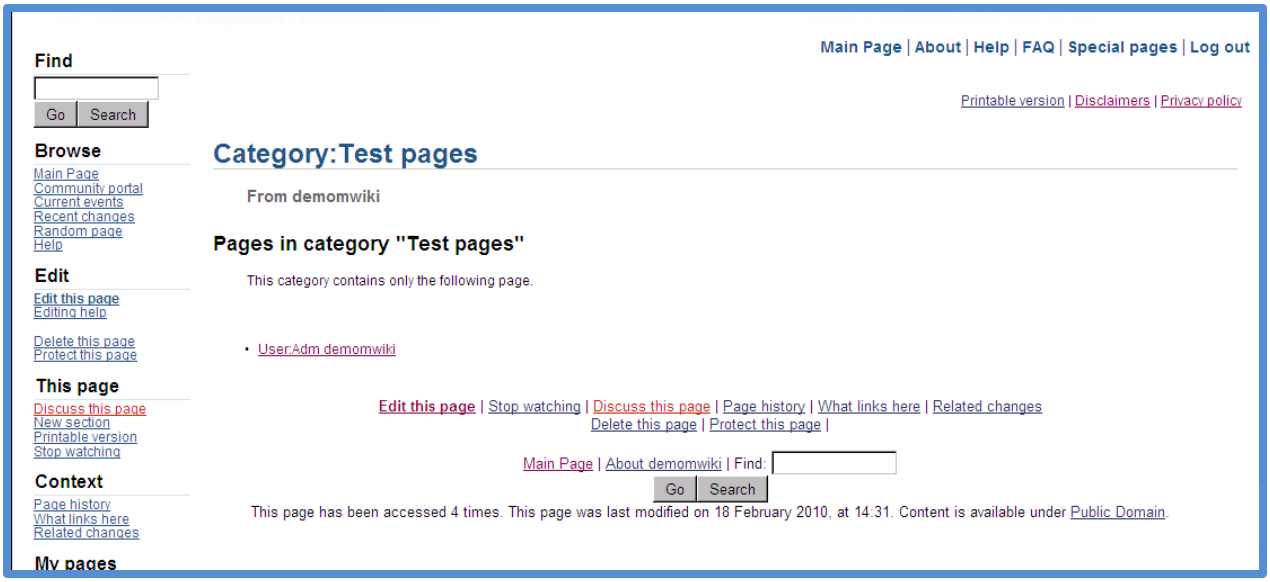


Easy basic formatting can be accomplished by using the 11 buttons at the top of the edit window. Clicking on the tools automatically inserts command codes that will change text's appearance or function when the page is viewed, but only the formatting codes will show in the edit window.

Button functions from left to right are:

- Bold text
- Italic text
- Internal link
- External link
- Level 2 headline
- Embedded file
- File link
- Mathematical formula
- Ignore wiki formatting
- Insert signature with timestamp
- Insert horizontal line

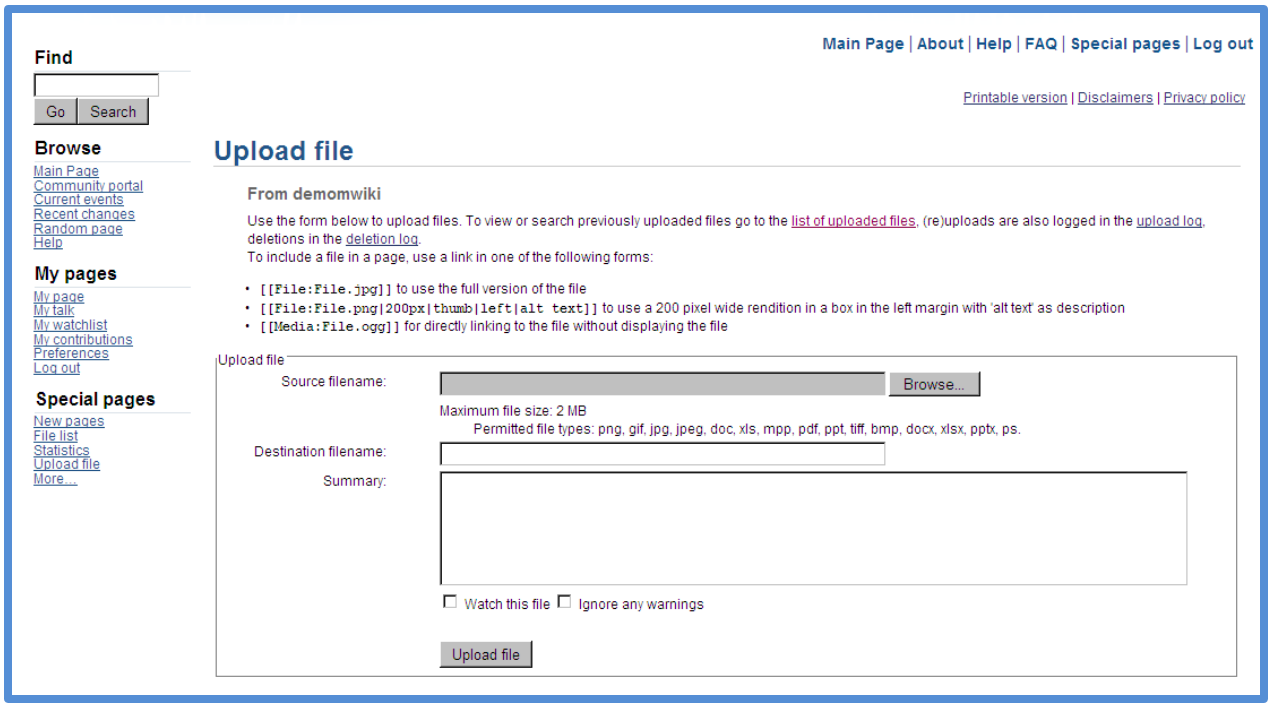
A fully detailed explanation of wiki markup formatting commands, in table form, can be found at http://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Help:Formatting , and a Wikipedia formatting Cheatsheet can be seen in *Appendix B*: *Wikipedia Formatting Cheatsheet*, page 21.



Categories

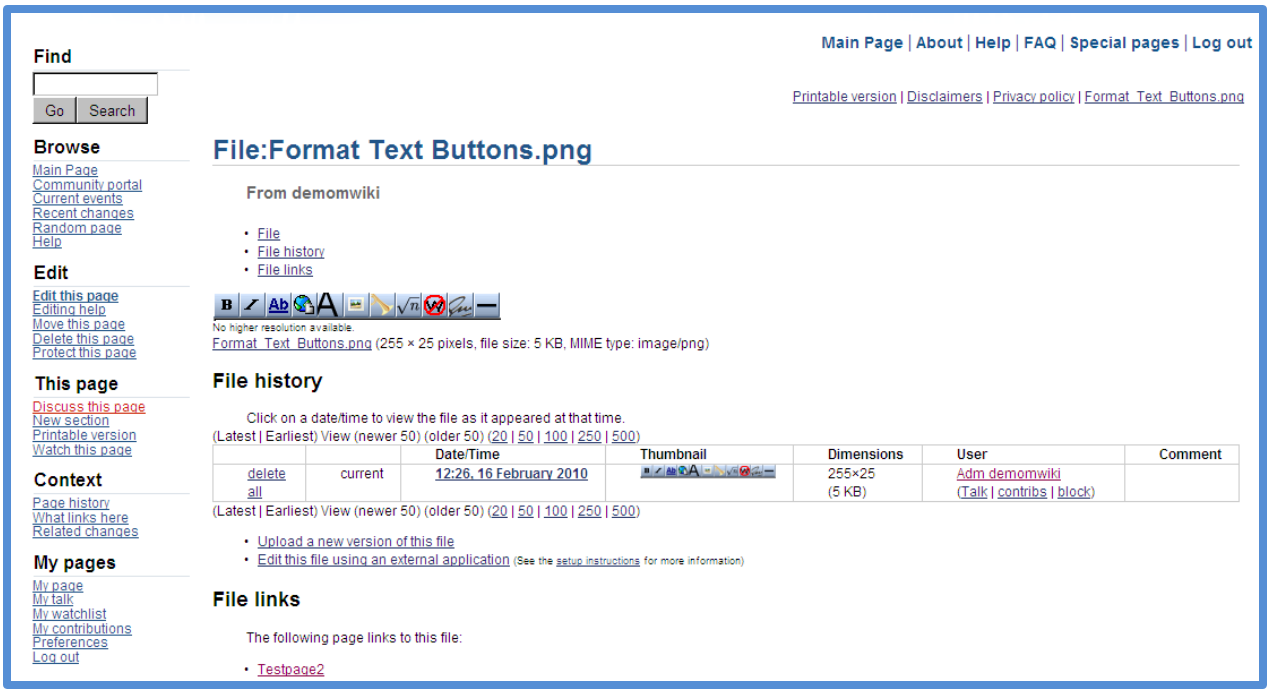
The *Category* namespace contains dynamic lists of other pages, and is useful for grouping pages by topic or genre. You can insert a command, [[*Category:NAME*]], at the bottom of the edit window that won't show when the page is viewed, but will automatically include it in an alphabetized category list—as well as generate a link that will appear in the upper right. A page can be assigned to multiple categories.

__TIP:__ A page called __Category:[NAME]__ must have been previously created for this command to work.

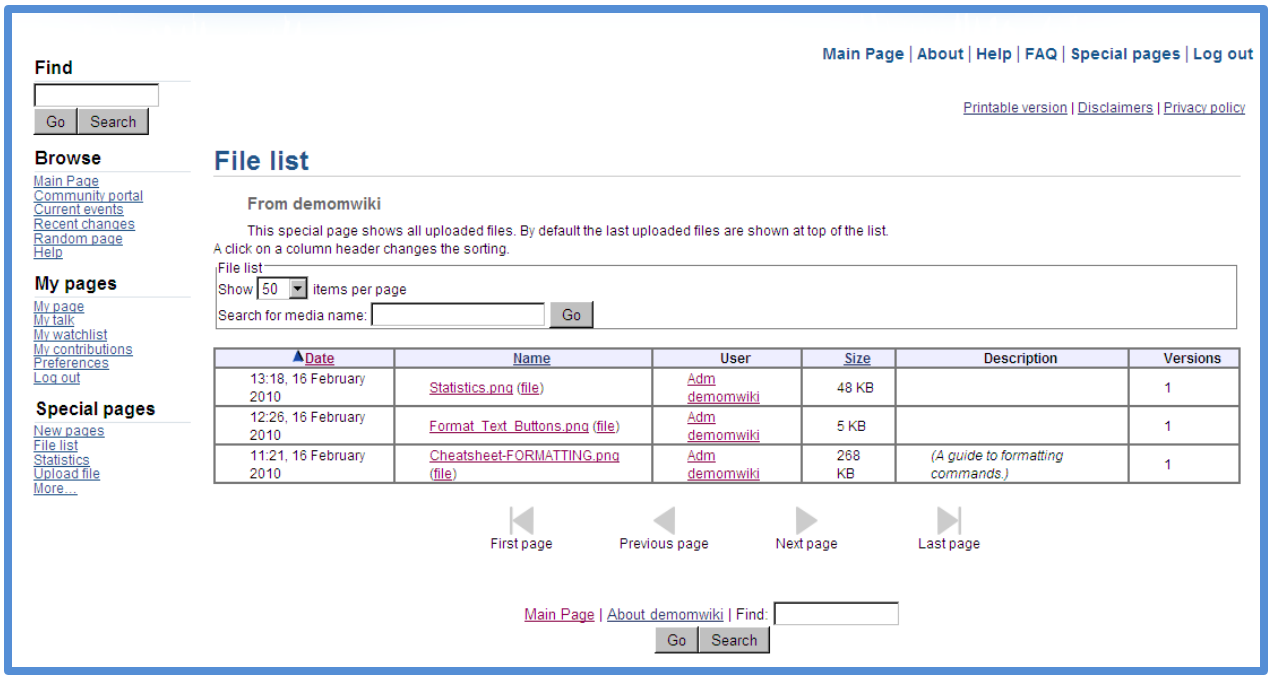


Uploads

You can insert images or other media into the edit window as full versions, thumbnails, or links by first uploading the files to the wiki and then using the relevant commands. The **Upload file** link at the bottom of the left menu brings up the screen above. Browse for a file, use either the default destination name or a custom one, enter a description if you like, and then clicking **Upload file** (types: *gif*, *jpg*, *jpeg*, *ogg* or *png)* automatically creates an information page in the **File** namespace.



Clicking **File list** (under **Special pages**)in the left menu will display a list of all uploaded files (see below).These files can then be embedded, linked to, or searched for.



Embed or Link a File

In the edit window, place the cursor where you would like an image to appear.

Click on the **Embedded image** icon in the middle of the editing tool bar, which will insert the command syntax [[*File:example.jpg*]].

Keeping the *File:* prefix, change *example.jpg* to the exact name (including file type, i.e., jpg, gif, png, etc.) of the uploaded image by overtyping (or copying-and-pasting from the File list), and the image will appear in the page after you click **Save**.

Preferred formats are:

- JPEG for photographic images with millions of colors and shades;
- PNG for fixed-color pixelated images such as icons;
- SVG for structured drawings or logos; and
- OGG for audio.

> ***Note:*** *In addition to embedding an image, you can create a thumbnail (and predefine the size in* ***Preferences****), add a caption, insert a link to the file, and control many other variables by adding appropriate commands in the edit window. For detailed information on command syntax, see* *http://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Help:Images#Format*

You can also add text files, such as PDFs, Word documents, or Excel spreadsheets, links to other wiki pages, or add external links to websites or media files.

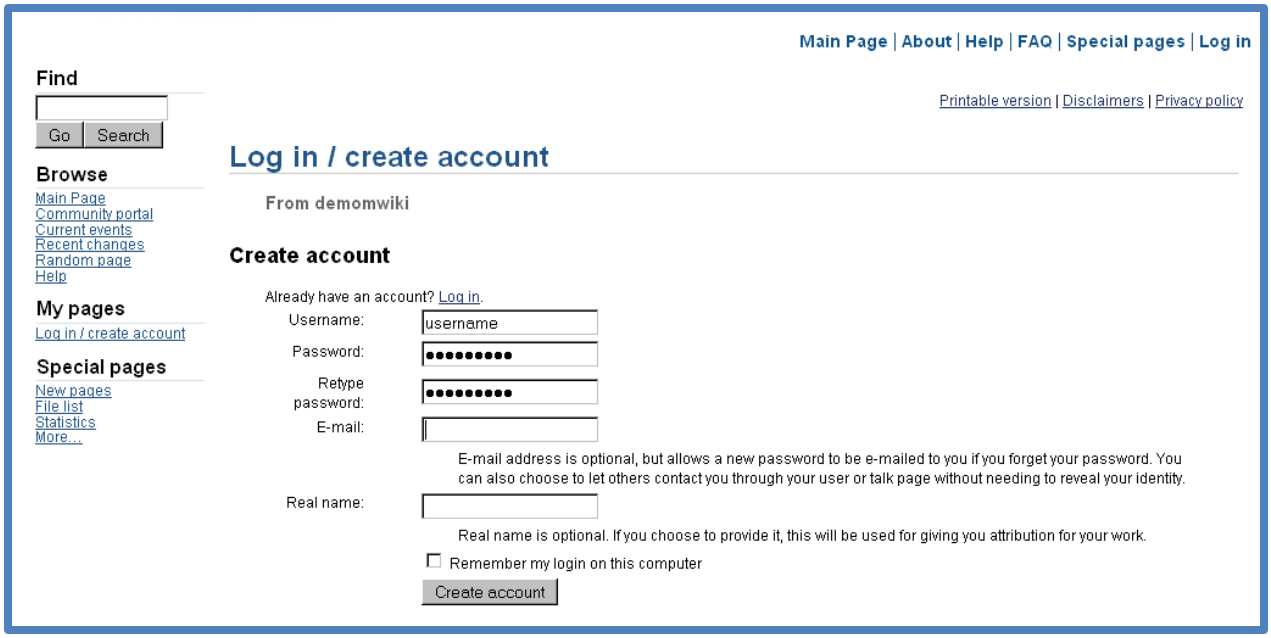
> ***TIP:*** *Wiki markup uses the pipestem character ("\|") to define Individual commands in command strings.*

Some command structures for including various file types in a page are:

- Default thumbnail with caption: [[File:NAME.TYPE|thumb|CAPTION TEXT]]
- Internal page link: [[FULL PAGE NAME]]

Uploaded files appear in the **Recent Changes** list, and are also logged on **Special:Log/upload.**

For more detailed information, go to http://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Help:Links.



Create an Account

While most pages in the wiki can be read by anyone, a user must create an account to gain the privileges of editing, commenting, and managing pages. Registering with just a username and password will automatically generate a page in the User namespace called *User:YOURUSERNAME* (see below).

Although the page can be viewed, no text can be entered (which is necessary to actually "create" the page), and no editing privileges are granted, until the registration is confirmed. An email exchange is required to become a *confirmed* registered user.

> ***TIP:*** *Even though the account creation window says that the email address is optional, an email address MUST be entered to make a registration official.*

My Page

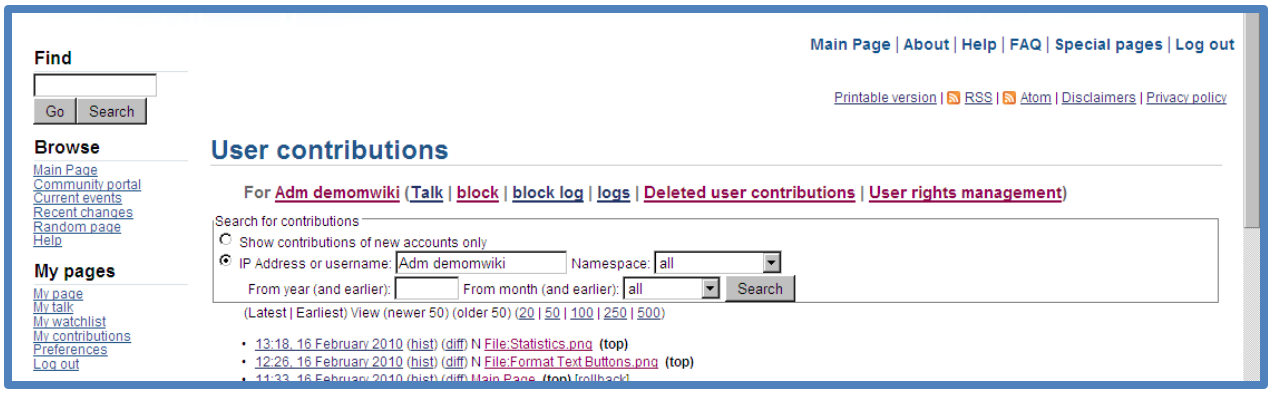
After successfully registering, clicking **My page** in the left menu brings up the page with your username. **Create this page** is highlighted, and clicking that will bring up the edit window (see *Create New Page*, page 7).

The personal page is usually used for profile-type information, or as a sandbox-style test bed for new text or commentary. Like all other pages in the wiki, clicking **Discuss this page** will open a Talk page.

Tracking and Administration

MediaWiki contains numerous ways to track and present information about the site. The software stores a copy of every version of every page in the database, and can generate reports sorted by almost any criteria.

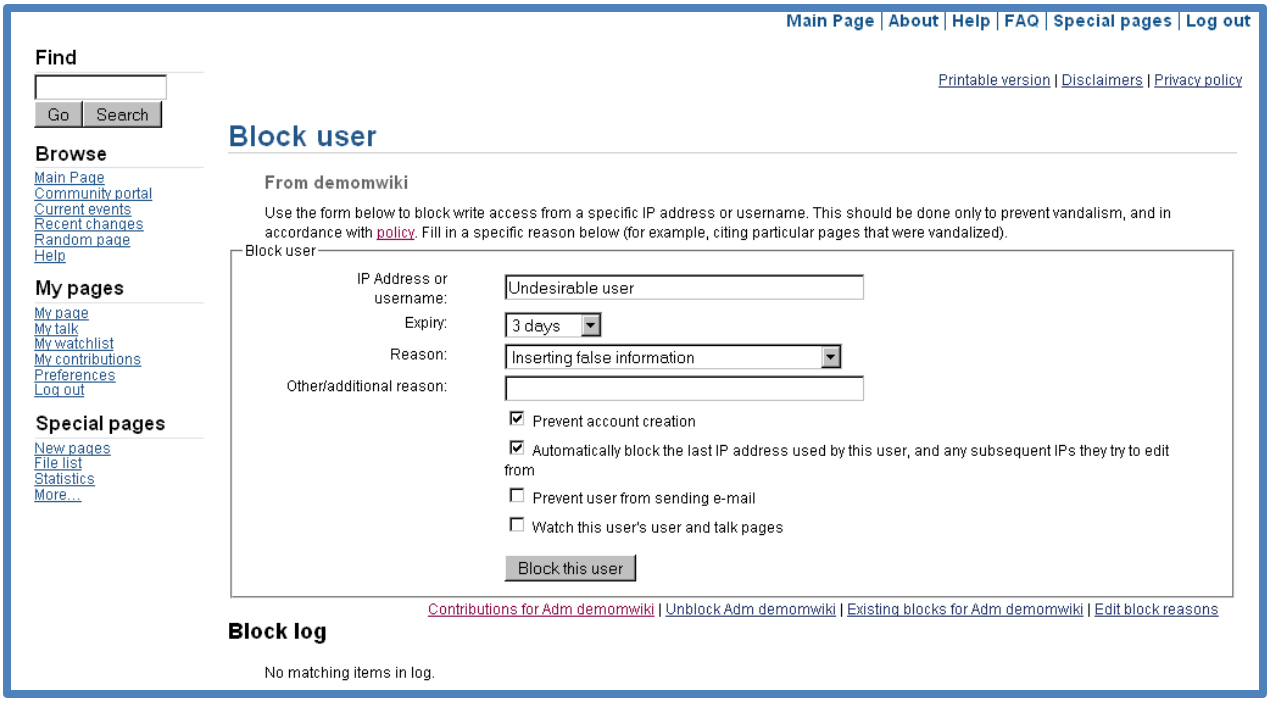
While the wiki, by default, is not designed to be very restrictive, it does offer some simple administrative tools to manage access at both the group and individual user levels. (See *Appendix D: User Group Rights*, page 23).



User Contributions

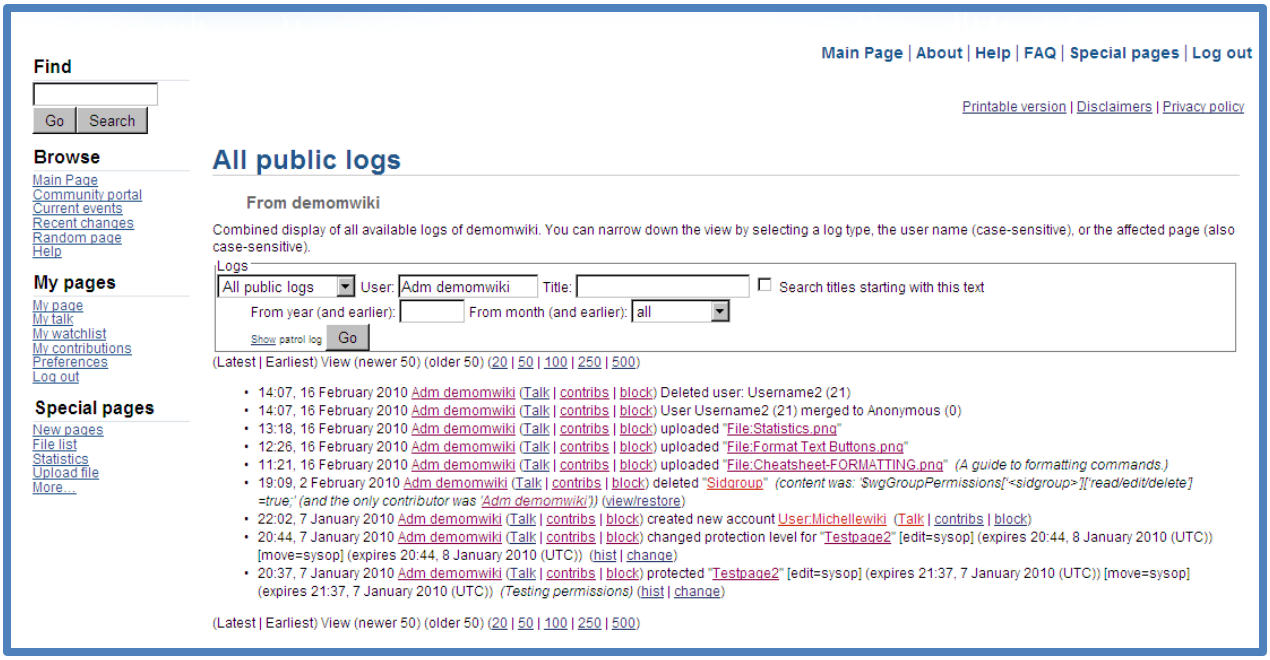
Clicking **My contributions** in the left menu opens the *User contributions* page. From here, you can not only view the activity of any user on a page-by-page basis, sorted by date and time, but you also have access to a new set of links at the top of the page that offer several administrative control functions.

> ***TIP:*** *All of these administrative functions, plus many others such as Preferences and Password reset, can be accessed in the Users and Rights section of Special Pages. Access this by clicking either* ***Special pages*** *(upper right), or* ***More*** *(bottom left). See Appendix C: Special Pages, page 22 for a full list.*



Block

Clicking **Block** brings up the *Block user* screen. User access can be blocked in several ways, or marked to watch, by either name or IP address.

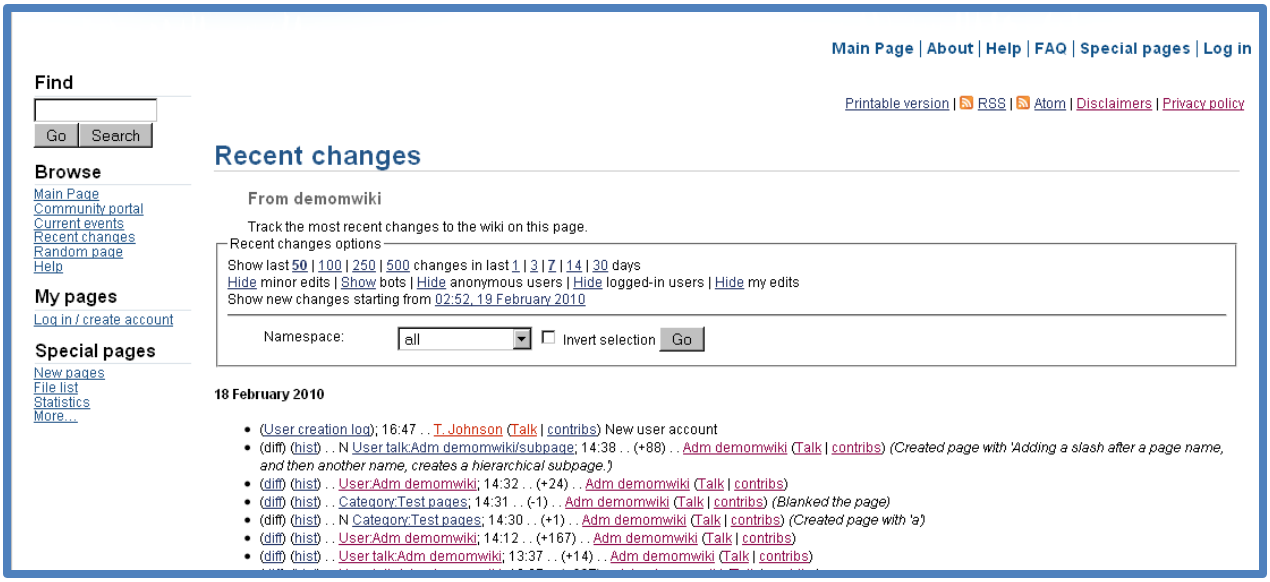


Logs

Clicking **Logs** opens a window that can track a particular user's activity by page title, date range, or both

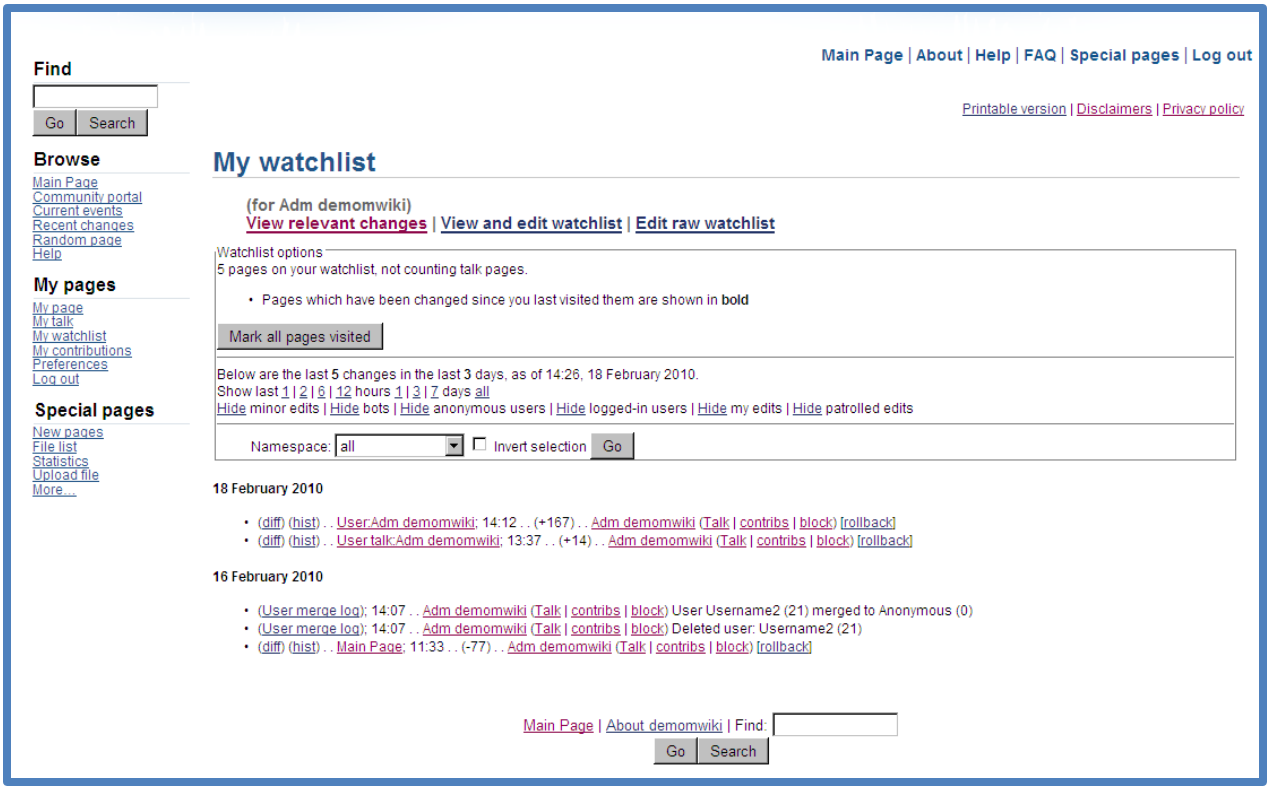
User Rights

The **User rights management** screen allows control of a user's group rights. You can grant or remove either *Bureaucrat* or *Administrator* group privileges. (See *Appendix D: User Group Rights*, page 23).



Recent Changes

A customizable list of all changes that have been made to any pages.



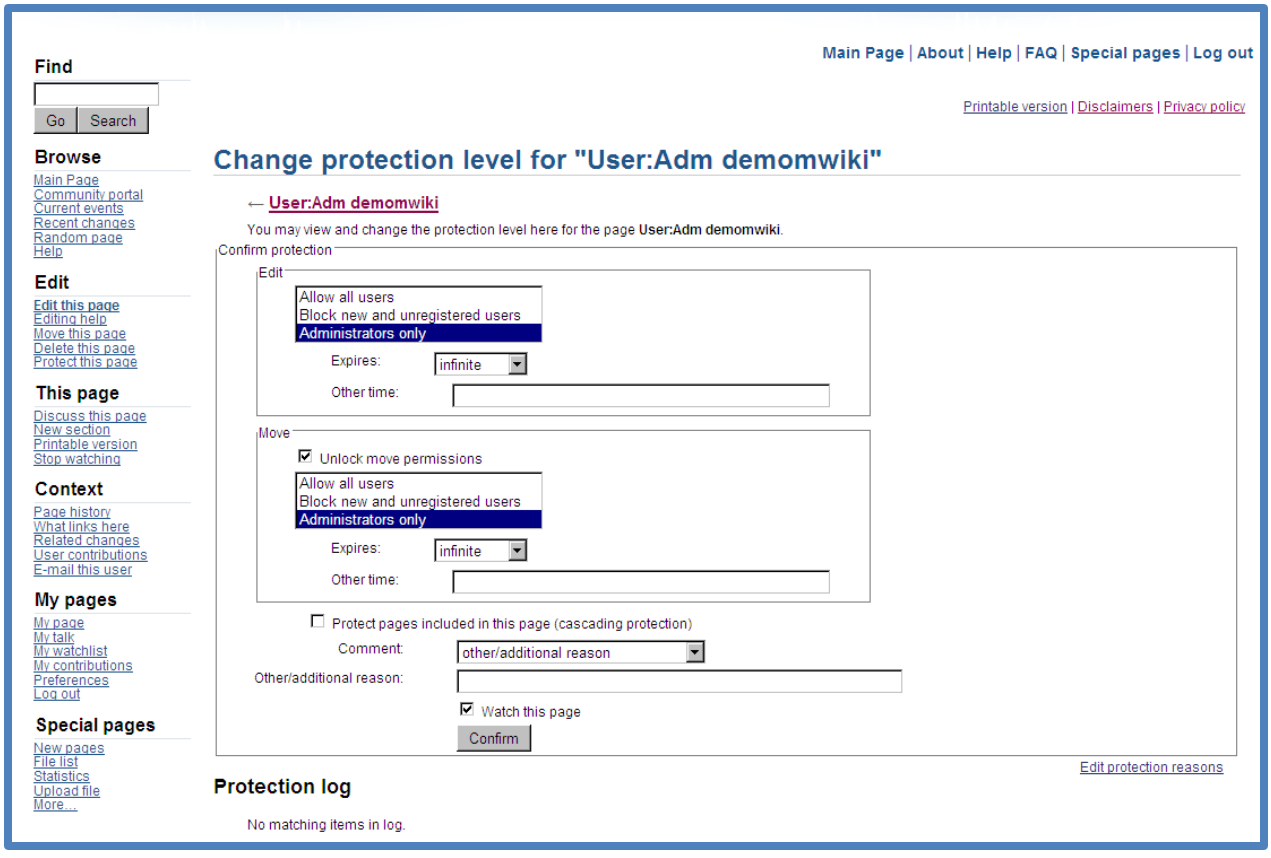
Watchlist

A list of pages marked by the user for change tracking.

> ***TIP:*** *Users can also set email preferences to automatically generate a notice of changes to watched pages.*

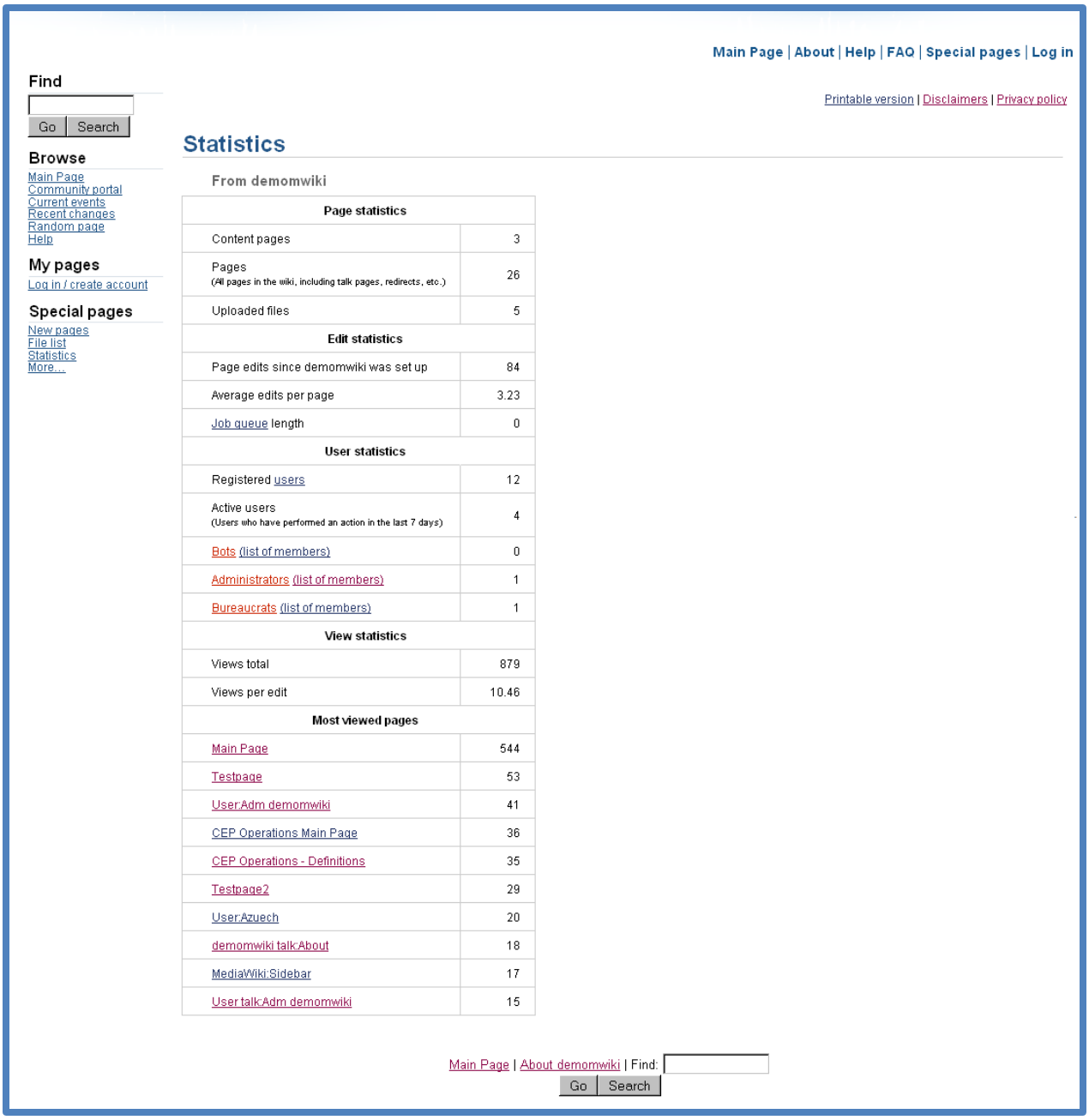
Page Deletion

Clicking **Delete this page** in the left menu allows you to delete a particular page, including all associated logs, its entire history, and all saved older versions.



Page Protection

Clicking **Protect this page** in the left menu allows you to choose which groups have permission to edit, delete, or move a particular page to a different namespace.



Statistics

Clicking **Statistics** in the left menu opens a screen that presents compiled data on pages, edits, users and views.

My Dashboard

The *My Dashboard* tab will only appear on the Storefront after a product has been provisioned through APPS.gov Now at https://citizen.apps.gov/index.php.

This Storefront tab allows a system administrator access to a summary of provisioned products. From here you can view a variety of statistics and application metric graphs by clicking the "Go To My Metrics" link at the right of each listed product (see below).

NOTE: *These graphs may change in upcoming 2010 releases.*

Appendix A: Useful Links

http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Help:Contents

A direct link to the contents page of the MediaWiki User Manual.

http://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/MediaWiki

MediaWiki's home site.

http://my.safaribooksonline.com/9780596156299

A link to a site with an online version of a book called *MediaWiki, 1st Edition*, a good guide to managing a MediaWiki installation. The site requires a subscription to view the book, and also offers a print version.

http://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Project:PD_help/Copying

A page with instructions for copying MediaWiki help documentation into the Help pages on your site.

http://www.mwusers.com/forums/content.php?128-Welcome

A MediaWiki users forum site with a variety of useful information.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/How_to_edit

A useful quick guide to writing and editing in MediaWiki, with links to other information and a style manual.

Appendix B: Wikipedia Formatting Cheatsheet

A quick guide to wiki markup text and image formatting codes.

For a much more comprehensive guide, see http://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/Help:Formatting

Wiki text	Result
`''italic''`	*italic*
`'''bold'''`	**bold**
`'''''bold and italic'''''`	***bold and italic***

`==heading==`
`===level 2===`
`====level 3====`
`=====level 4=====`
	Headings in different sizes

`[[Link to another page]]` `[[Link|different title]]`	Internal Link to another page on the wiki
`http://www.test.org` `[http://www.test.org Text]`	External link Link with description
`[[fr:Page en français]]`	Interwiki link to french Wikipedia (appears under "languages")
`[[Category:Example]]`	Add article to category "example"
`----`	horizontal line

`* one`
`* two`
`* three`
	Bullet list

`# one`
`# two`
`# three`
	Numbered list

`[[Image:File.jpg|Text]]`
`[[Image:File.jpg|frame|Text]]`
`[[Image:File.jpg|thumb|Text]]`
	Image with alternative text
	Image aligned right with caption
	Thumbnail

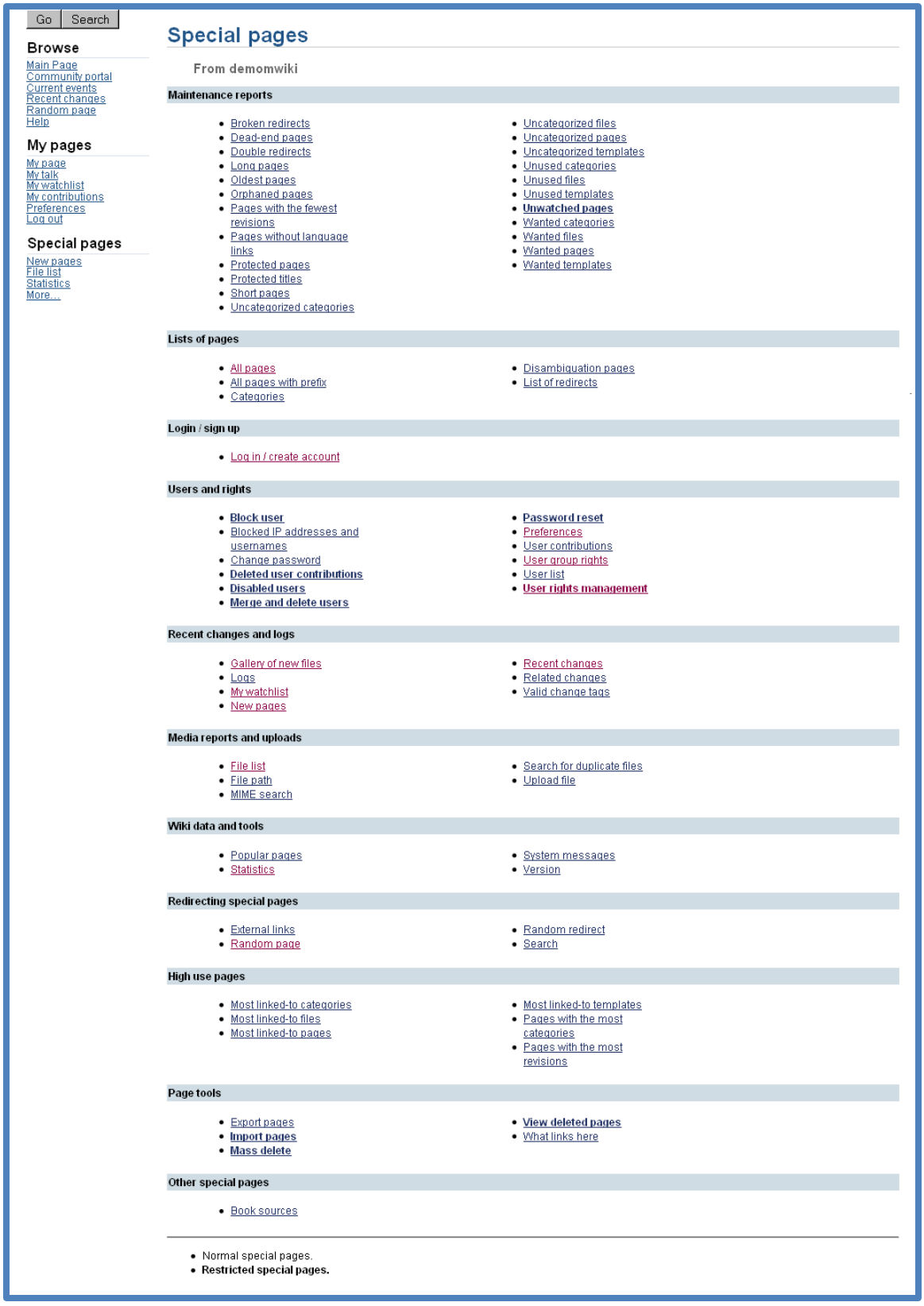
`[[Media:File.ogg]]`	Download link
`{{Name}}`	Include template "Name"
`--~~~`	Signature (Link to userpage)
`--~~~~`	Signature with timestamp
`#REDIRECT [[Other article]]`	Redirect to another article

http://www.wikipedia.org

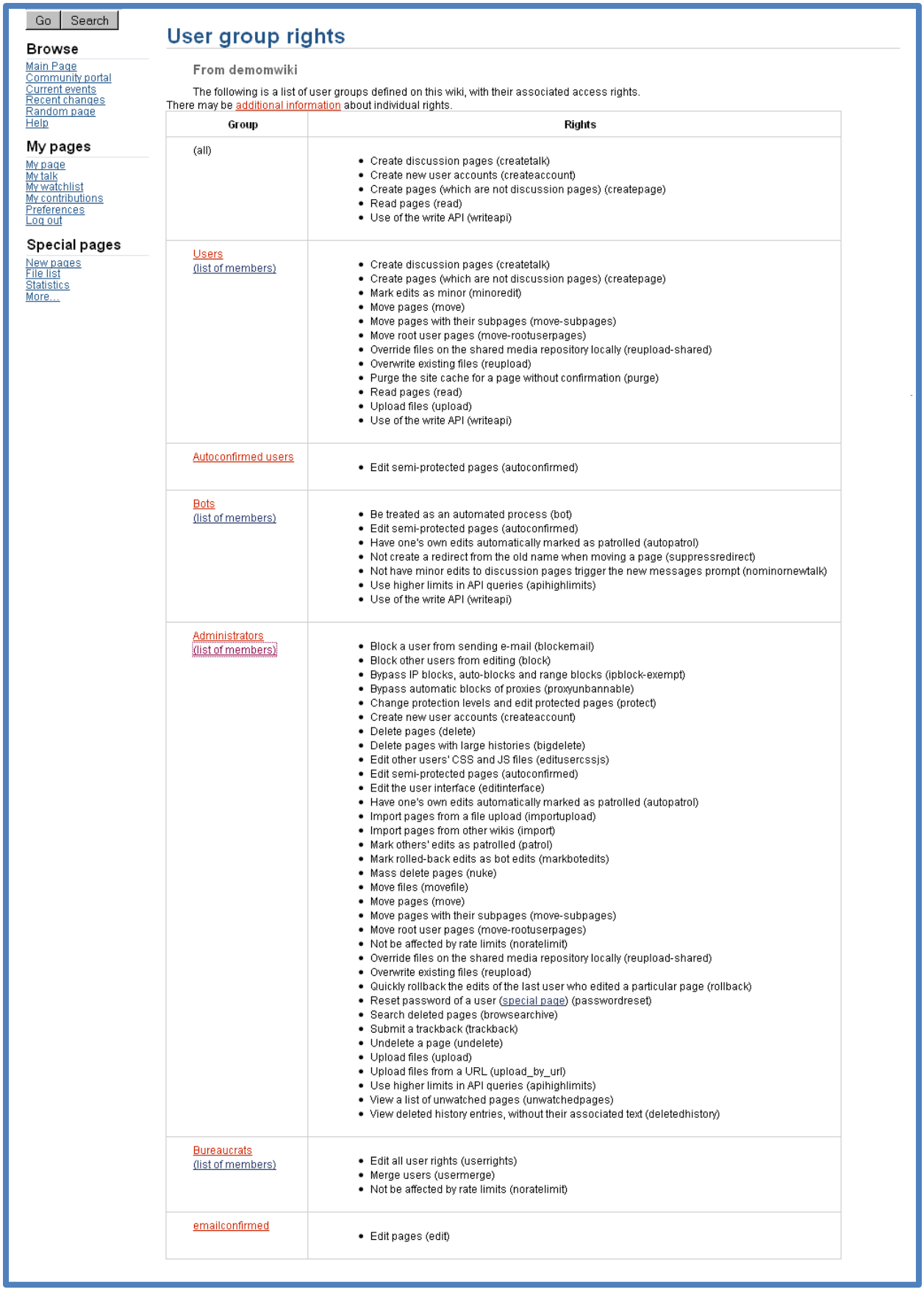
Wikimedia Foundation
http://www.wikimediafoundation.org
info-en@wikimedia.org

Appendix C: Special Pages

This page, accessed by clicking either **Special Pages** at the top right or **More** in the left menu, contains links to nearly all the functional and informational pages in the wiki.



Appendix D: User Group Rights



Go Search

Browse
Main Page
Community portal
Current events
Recent changes
Random page
Help

My pages
My page
My talk
My watchlist
My contributions
Preferences
Log out

Special pages
New pages
File list
Statistics
More...

User group rights

From demomwiki

The following is a list of user groups defined on this wiki, with their associated access rights.
There may be additional information about individual rights.

Group	Rights
(all)	• Create discussion pages (createtalk) • Create new user accounts (createaccount) • Create pages (which are not discussion pages) (createpage) • Read pages (read) • Use of the write API (writeapi)
Users (list of members)	• Create discussion pages (createtalk) • Create pages (which are not discussion pages) (createpage) • Mark edits as minor (minoredit) • Move pages (move) • Move pages with their subpages (move-subpages) • Move root user pages (move-rootuserpages) • Override files on the shared media repository locally (reupload-shared) • Overwrite existing files (reupload) • Purge the site cache for a page without confirmation (purge) • Read pages (read) • Upload files (upload) • Use of the write API (writeapi)
Autoconfirmed users	• Edit semi-protected pages (autoconfirmed)
Bots (list of members)	• Be treated as an automated process (bot) • Edit semi-protected pages (autoconfirmed) • Have one's own edits automatically marked as patrolled (autopatrol) • Not create a redirect from the old name when moving a page (suppressredirect) • Not have minor edits to discussion pages trigger the new messages prompt (nominornewtalk) • Use higher limits in API queries (apihighlimits) • Use of the write API (writeapi)
Administrators (list of members)	• Block a user from sending e-mail (blockemail) • Block other users from editing (block) • Bypass IP blocks, auto-blocks and range blocks (ipblock-exempt) • Bypass automatic blocks of proxies (proxyunbannable) • Change protection levels and edit protected pages (protect) • Create new user accounts (createaccount) • Delete pages (delete) • Delete pages with large histories (bigdelete) • Edit other users' CSS and JS files (editusercssjs) • Edit semi-protected pages (autoconfirmed) • Edit the user interface (editinterface) • Have one's own edits automatically marked as patrolled (autopatrol) • Import pages from a file upload (importupload) • Import pages from other wikis (import) • Mark others' edits as patrolled (patrol) • Mark rolled-back edits as bot edits (markbotedits) • Mass delete pages (nuke) • Move files (movefile) • Move pages (move) • Move pages with their subpages (move-subpages) • Move root user pages (move-rootuserpages) • Not be affected by rate limits (noratelimit) • Override files on the shared media repository locally (reupload-shared) • Overwrite existing files (reupload) • Quickly rollback the edits of the last user who edited a particular page (rollback) • Reset password of a user (special page) (passwordreset) • Search deleted pages (browsearchive) • Submit a trackback (trackback) • Undelete a page (undelete) • Upload files (upload) • Upload files from a URL (upload_by_url) • Use higher limits in API queries (apihighlimits) • View a list of unwatched pages (unwatchedpages) • View deleted history entries, without their associated text (deletedhistory)
Bureaucrats (list of members)	• Edit all user rights (userrights) • Merge users (usermerge) • Not be affected by rate limits (noratelimit)
emailconfirmed	• Edit pages (edit)